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Excerpts from "The Japan Year Book, 1941-1942"

Page 233: "Revision of the Military Service Law"

Revision in 1939

The Law Amending the Military Service Law was promulgated on March 8, 1939. The items of revision include: amendments to the regulations on the term of military service; conscription of ex-service men; postponement of conscription for students and the manner of this conscription; abrogation of the short-term service system; and recognition of the privilege of postponement of conscription for Japanese students in Manchukuo Government schools.

Revision of the Term of Service.

Under the new Law the term of the supplementary reserve service for the Army was lengthened from 12 years and four months, while that of the first reserve service for the Navy was prolonged from four years to five years and that of the second reserve service from five years to seven years.

Page 234: Revision of the Military Service Law in 1941.

Another revised Military Service Law which was passed by the Imperial Diet at its 76th Session was enforced on April 1, 1941.

The main points of revision are (1) the enrolment of new conscripts in overseas districts into the garrisons nearest to their residences, (2) the abrogation of the second reserve service system, and (3) the prolongation of the days of call for the education of the supplementary reservists.

(1) According to the provisions of the existing Military Service Law, new conscripts are enrolled, as a rule, into the armies stationed in areas in Japan proper where they are registered as Japanese subjects, or, into the garrisons in such overseas districts as Chosen, Taiwan, Kwantung or China for convenience. There arise cases where the ambitious young men who have gone out to overseas territories to open a future for themselves have to return to Japan proper for their examination and enrollment and are cut short of their ambition. The revision is therefore made in this respect to cause young men to be enrolled in the armies or garrisons stationed in the regions other than Japan proper without regard to their census registration. The new rule shall be applied first to those young men who are to receive the conscription examination in 1942.

(2) The old system divides those eligible for military service into three categories, namely, the active, the 1st reserve and the second reserve. In view of the increased demands made on armed services in wartime, the increase of different kinds of works and the intricacy of organization in the recent defense services, the demarcation between the first and second reserves has become meaningless, the State requiring all reserve soldiers to appear for active service at any time and in the same spirit of loyalty. And the new law provides that all those who have completed their active service shall be enlisted in the reserve list for the whole length of term formerly divided into the two reserve services. This rule governing the reserve servicemen came into force as from April 1, 1941.

(3) With the progress of military drill and education in many fields of military art, the duration of term for educating the supplementary reservists has been lengthened from the present 120 to 180 days, the rule coming into force from April 1, 1941.

Page 241. National Defense Security Law

The National Defense Security Law is one of the most important legislation, which was approved by the 76th session (December 1940-March 1941) of the Imperial Diet and enforced on May 10, 1941.

There is already in operation the Military Secret Protection Law designed to guard against the leakage of military secrets and the Defense Resources Secrets Protection Law to safeguard the secrecy of the defense resources of the country. But, no law specifically intended to protect the highest secrets of the State relating to diplomatic, financial and economic matters had yet been enacted.